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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3384

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHXD/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000336

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/2019

TAGS: PREL PGOV OSCE GR RS GG BO

SUBJECT: GREECE AGREES "COMPLETELY" WITH U.S. ON RUSSIA,
ABKHAZIA, SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: SECSTATE 24186

Classified By: POLCOUNS ROBIN QUINVILLE. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) DepPolCouns discussed reftel points on Russia recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and basing plans with OSCE Special Envoy for Protracted Conflicts Greek Ambassador Charalambos Christopoulos and, separately, with MFA A5 Directorate for CIS Countries Counselor Lambros Kakassis. Both said that Greece agreed "completely" with the U.S. position. Christopoulos expanded with the comment that this was exactly Greece's position as well and that they welcomed U.S. assistance in ensuring others embraced it. Kakassis likewise expressed "total agreement," noting that he would like to use the points for his own drafting of talking points.

¶2. (C) At the same time, Kakassis took the opportunity to note that during A5 Director Ambassador Tsamados' visit to Belarus ten days ago -- the first time that a Greek delegation had done so -- the Belarus authorities complained that the EU was leaning too heavily on Belarus trying to dissuade it from recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Belarusians claimed this represented a "double standard" because the EU dealt amiably now with Russia and it had recognized the two rebel regions, whereas Belarus was only rumored to be thinking about recognition and was being subjected to enormous pressure.

SPECKHARD